

Courier

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Young Drivers Summit focuses on driving safety

It was a diverse crowd of almost 300 people who came together to discuss a serious issue facing everyone: how to improve driving safety for young drivers under the age of 21. The Young Drivers Summit, held June 3 at the Government Center,

brought together students, educators, parents, law enforcement representatives, traffic safety experts and county officials

to explore ways to create safer drivers.

"Teenagers and young drivers are more likely to be involved in a single car crash than any other age group," said Board of Supervisors

See Summit, page 2



Chairman Connolly listens to some of the audience members at the Young Drivers Summit.

Patriot Challenge successfully met

The parking lots at George Mason University were filled with many of the county's and region's emergency response resources recently as the county tested its ability to respond to an emergency situation. Labeled *Patriot Challenge 05*, the specially designed command post exercise brought together county, regional and federal response teams to demonstrate their reaction capability to a hypothetical Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) emergency situation –

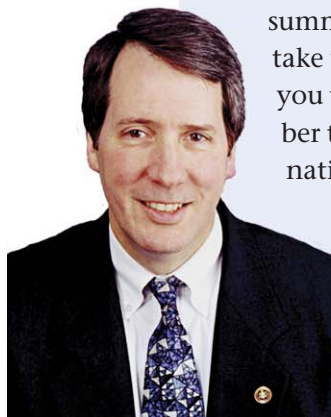
but all too real – to evaluate levels of command control, communications and coordination.

The exercise began the morning of June 2 at GMU when county response teams assembled with many of the resources they would use to respond to an actual emergency situation. Police, Fire & Rescue, the Health Department and other county units were joined by teams from Inova hospital system, American Red Cross, GMU

See Exercise, page 4

Celebrating the Fourth of July

The Fourth of July is right around the corner. It often symbolizes the start of summer when many of us begin to take vacations. This year, I ask that you take a few moments and remember the real reason we celebrate this national holiday.



Our forefathers decided that personal liberty and justice were important enough to fight for and many of them risked all that they owned to help establish the foundations of what has become the most enviable country in the world.

Even with some faults, our country continues to be strong because of the guaranteed freedoms that allow us to

explore new ideas and develop as we desire.

Fairfax County has grown to more than a million people – diverse, dedicated and working together to make this one of the most attractive places in the nation to live. And our county government reflects that diversity and dedication in providing the best services possible to our residents.

I'm proud to be a member of the county staff as we work together to keep our communities safe, strong and enjoyable. I salute each of you during this holiday time.

Enjoy this holiday and return safely. You are an important member of the county team.

Tony Giffi

Summit, from page 1

Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly**, who pointed out that 24 percent of traffic-related deaths last year in the county were under 21 years of age. Connolly recommended several areas that can improve safe driving that included renovating the school's driver education programs, encouraging agreements

between parents and teenagers before they get permits and licenses, increasing police surveillance with DWI checkpoints and passing new legislation to aid safe driving. "We must sustain this momentum to

find solutions to a growing problem," he said.

Wendy Hamilton, national president of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), spoke to an almost-full board auditorium. She recounted three devastating alcohol-related accidents where four members of her

family lost their lives. She advocated Virginia legislation that could improve driving safety, including penalties for not having all car occupants seat-belted.

Also speaking to the group was **James Wright**, senior highway safety specialist with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. He suggested young drivers develop a mental caution switch to alert them when something may be going wrong. He also suggested that parents are the key to safe teenage driving. "What can parents do to improve safe driving?" he asked. "Everything!" he responded.

After these and other keynote speakers, the attendees joined one of five workshops – Legislation; Student Involvement and Perception; Schools and Prevention: Driving Education; Parents and Community: Roles, Responsibilities and Involvement; Enforcement and Suppression: Courts and Police – to discuss related issues and recommend action steps. Following the hour-long meetings, student representatives reported on recommendations of their groups. Some of the ideas included improving driver educa-

See Summit, page 3



Wendy Hamilton

Summit, from page 2

tion by making it more interesting, relevant and beginning earlier in school; banning cell phones during driving; limiting the number of passengers; increasing the required number of hours of actual behind-the-wheel driving; encouraging parents and teenagers to sign a contract outlining driver expectations; requiring parent participation in driver's education; expanding new driver and public education; and pushing for tougher laws, punishment and enforcement.

Jane Strauss, School Board member, and **Sharon Bulova**, Braddock District supervisor, commented on the positive approach being taken at the summit, noting that this is a very complicated issue that involves both young people and parents. "The dialogue is a great opportunity for the schools to hear ideas from this diverse group," said Strauss.

Police Captain **J.F. Bowman**, commander of the Traffic Division who has been working with driving programs for young people, agreed with other speakers that parents are a key to instilling good driving practices in

**Captain J.F. Bowman**

their children. "Although the police have a vital role to play in reducing young driver fatalities and injuries, parents remain the key player

in developing safe new drivers. Too many parents act as if the day the teen actually is presented the operators license their role is largely over. This is far from the fact. I like to equate this with being at the 10-yard line with 90 yards to go, not at the 90 with 10 to go. Parents must remain active by continuing to exercise parental control. They must set rules and enforce those rules. They must

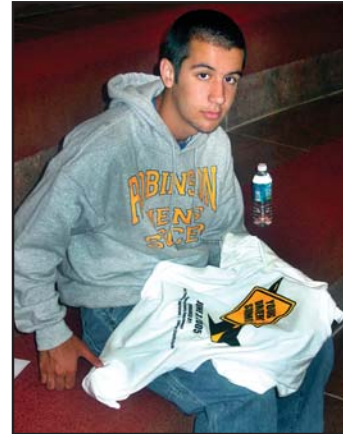
continue to drive with their young driver in all kinds of driving situations and allow them the benefit of their experience and guidance. And most important, parents must set the driving example for their children long before they even anticipate their young drivers getting behind the wheel for themselves," he said. "The Police Department does not have the resources to consistently apply the level of enforcement which would change driver's behavior. The community must take safety on our roads and highways seriously and practice safe driving at all times, not just when providing guidance and instruction to our new drivers."

Kia Sedghi, a junior at Robinson High School, said he was "encouraged" to come to the summit by his mother because he received a traffic ticket recently. "I don't think it will be a waste of time. I'll learn something," he said.

Surrounded by several of his students, **David Foley**, a driver education teacher at Oakton High School said, "Anything we learn or steps we can take to reduce traffic accidents and improve driving safety will be well received," pointing out that the T-shirts participants received were good ways to keep the safe driving message circulating among the teenage audience.

Carol Lamborn and **Kim Bassarab**, staff members of DPWES, were both volunteer facilitators in the work groups. "We all know traffic accidents are a serious issue and I'm glad to do what I can to help increase awareness of the dangers of driving," said Lamborn. Bassarab added, "Maturity is so important when driving. With so much traffic in this area, young drivers can easily be distracted. We have to stress making good choices and good decisions when driving."

For more information on the Young Drivers Summit, contact Lt. Cindy McAlister, 703-246-7832 or cindy.mcalister@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

**Kia Sedghi****Carol Lamborn****Kim Bassarab**

Exercise, from page 1

and representatives of state and federal emergency management organizations to



Registration for visitors at Patriot Challenge.

exhibit their emergency response resources and participate in the exercise. Everything from trained dogs to robots to real Red Cross refreshments were assembled in the parking lots. "This was an awesome display that really showed we can react. I think anyone would be impressed," said one event observer.

According to **Robert Stalzer**, deputy county executive under whom the county's emergency response resources fall, this was the first county exercise of this size that tested the command and control of the county's response teams. "While this was a command post exercise

only, it was a good test to show things that worked well and areas that need improving," said Stalzer.

After a review of the assembled response units, more than 280 exercise participants, county officials, invited guests and media



Rob Stalzer conducting a status meeting in the AEOC.

gathered in the Patriot Center for a briefing that outlined a terrorist attack scenario. Exercise director, **Gerald Jaskulski**, assistant coordinator from the county's Office of Emergency Management, said the scenario was designed around three explosions that occurred after a circus at the Patriot Center. In addition to a number of casualties, the scenario described terrorist-supported cells as potentially having access to biological and chemical agents. "We tried to describe a scenario that would evaluate the response capabilities of many different

organizations," said Jaskulski, who worked with consultants at Dewberry Inc. to frame the scenario details.

After the scenario briefing concluded, a command structure was established both on-site at GMU and at the Alternate Emergency Operations Center in the Government Center to coordinate the efforts of the various agencies. "This was a chance to assess not only operational practices and



Response teams exhibit resources.

procedures but also identify potential policy changes that may be needed to ensure an efficient and effective response," said Jaskulski.

During the exercise, controllers and observers monitored the participating unit's responses, occasionally injecting scenario details that challenged a unit's response. The exercise concluded at 3 p.m. with representatives of the participating units providing their evaluations. The command post exercise followed the Office for Domestic Preparedness building block approach to exercises, Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation program doctrine (HSEEP). "Overall, the exercise was very successful," said Stalzer.

Patriot Challenge II on Oct. 19 will continue the scenario, testing and evaluating the response capabilities of this region. ■



AEOC in action.

Katherine
StrotmanSusan
RexfordMarguerite
KielyNoel
KaplanVanessa
JacksonKatharine
IchterTyler
CoreyDouglas
ByrdDaniel
Pierce

Ten employees honored with Onthank Awards

Onthank Awards were presented to 10 county employees at the June 20 Board of Supervisors meeting. The Onthank Awards are the county's highest employee recognition. Engraved plaques and cash awards were presented to the recipients by Board Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly** and County Executive **Tony Griffin**. Also presenting awards were School Board Chairman **Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner** and Superintendent **Jack Dale**.

Audrey Morton, chairperson of the Civil Service Commission, recognized the members of the selection committee which included **Clifford Fields**, at large member; **Jane Gwinn**, Braddock District; **Jeanne McChesney**, Dranesville District; **Ronald Copeland**, Hunter Mill District; **Jeffrey Sachs**, Lee District; **Eileen Garnett**, Mason District; **Mack Rhoades Jr.**, Mount Vernon District; **Ernestine Heastie**, Providence District; and **Philip Rosenthal**, Springfield District.

Those selected for this award were **Joseph Bakos Jr.**, chief zoning inspector, Department of Planning and Zoning (not pictured above); **Douglas K. Byrd**, lieutenant, Office of the Sheriff; **Tyler D. Corey**, lieutenant, Office of the Sheriff; **Katharine D. Ichter**, transportation division chief, Department of Transportation; **Vanessa A. Jackson**, custodian II, Key Middle School; **Noel H. Kaplan**, planner III, Department of Planning and Zoning; **Marguerite M. Kiely**, director, Department of Systems Management for Human Services; **Daniel L. Pierce**, lieutenant, Office of the Sheriff; **Susan M. Rexford**, career center specialist, West Springfield High School; and **Katherine J. Strotman**, management analyst II, Library.

The Onthank Award was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1966 to honor the memory of Col. **A. Heath Onthank** (U.S. Army, retired), the first chairman of the Fairfax County Civil Service Commission. Serving in the position from 1957 to 1962, he was a guiding force in the county's merit system. Maintained under the auspices of the Fairfax County Civil Service Commission, the award recognizes "accomplishments of outstanding worth in advancing and improving public service in the Fairfax County government and school system by an individual county employee."

Eligibility for the Onthank Award is open to merit system employees of the county government, and contracted unified salary scale and food service employees of the Fairfax County Public Schools. School teachers and instructional assistants are not eligible for this award.

Since the award began in 1966, 267 employees have been honored. Nominations are made by private residents, fellow employees, civic groups, and business and professional organizations.

Also nominated for the Onthank Award were: county – **Dallas L. Mitchem**, preventative maintenance specialist, Facilities Management Department; and **Mary A. Stevens**, deputy director, Department of Housing and Community Development; school system – **Kwame Boachie**, building supervisor, Fort Belvoir Elementary School; and **Dave Jones**, school construction inspector, Design and Construction Services.

For more information on the Onthank Awards, contact **Robert Fitzpatrick**, Department of Human Resources, 703-324-3306, TTY 703-222-7314. ■

HCD helps county employees realize home ownership dream

Visit HCD's
First-Time
Homebuyers
Web site at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homebuyer



June is National Homeownership Month. While owning your own home may seem out of the question, the Department of Housing and Community Development may be a great resource.

Many county employees may not be aware of HCD's First-Time Homebuyers Program. This program offers new and resale Affordable Dwelling Units for sale to eligible families at reasonable prices (currently between \$70,000 and \$160,000). Many employees, friends or family may be eligible to participate in the program.

Those meeting the eligibility criteria (see box) must take four steps to be placed on the eligibility list and receive a certificate of qualification to purchase a home:

1. Attend one of HCD's monthly orientations. The next orientation session will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center at 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 14.
2. Obtain a certificate of attendance for a Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) educational class covering the basics of homeownership such as budgeting, financing, working with a realtor, home inspections, etc. Call 703-246-5087, TTY 711, between 1 and 4 p.m. or see one of the staff members in the Homeownership Resources Center to schedule a class.

3. Visit a lender and obtain a conditional preapproval letter for a mortgage.

4. Make an appointment to attend an application session to provide your completed application, VHDA certificate, lender letter, a copy of your W-2s and federal tax returns for all adult household members.

Following the issuance of a certificate, you will be qualified to participate in drawings for new and resale units.

Special financing rates are available for those who purchase homes through our program (subject to availability of funding at the time of purchase). To qualify for this financing, which also can be used if you locate a home in Fairfax County without waiting to win a drawing, you must:

- ♦ Be a first-time homebuyer who lives or works in Fairfax County.
- ♦ The home must be located in Fairfax County and the price cannot exceed \$352,000.
- ♦ You must live in the home.
- ♦ You must attend a VHDA homeownership education class.
- ♦ Households with one or two members can qualify with maximum household income of \$86,900. Households of three or more members may have income up to \$100,000.

In addition to VHDA first-time home buyer interest rates, there are other financing programs which help first time home buyers, such as SPARC, Home Stride and American Dream Downpayment Initiative. Certain criteria and eligibility requirements apply to each one.

For more information about these programs, or to speak to someone about what HCD can do to help you buy a home of your own, visit the new Homeownership Resource Center located on the first floor of the Pender building, 3700 Pender Drive, Fairfax. You can also learn more by visiting HCD's First-Time Homebuyers Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homebuyer.

- Adelaide Bridges, HCD

First-Time Homebuyers Program criteria

- You must be a *first-time homebuyer*, defined as not having owned a home within the last three years with special exception for displaced homemakers or single parents who may have owned a home within the past three years with a spouse but are now divorced.

- Your household income must be a minimum of \$25,000 and below the maximum limit depending on household size:

1 - \$43,750	5 - \$67,500
2 - \$50,000	6 - \$72,500
3 - \$56,000	7 - \$77,500
4 - \$62,500	8 - \$82,500

- You must be able to get a conditional pre-approval letter from a lender.

Briefs

Update Your EAN

County employees should check and update their Emergency Alert Network (EAN) account. Check for accuracy and current information, including your building location. If you experience any difficulty or need assistance, please call the Office of Emergency Management at 703-324-2362, TTY 711.

Stormwater Captured

Linda Q. Smyth, Providence District supervisor; **Jimmie D. Jenkins**, director of the county's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services; and **Sally Ormsby**, a member of the board of directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Conservation District, joined in a ceremony on June 21 in the Providence District Office parking lot to break ground for one of the county's most innovative stormwater collection concepts. An underground retention system of permeable storage pipes will slowly

release rain water collected from a new "rain garden" and improved parking lot surface. Instead of allowing stormwater with pollutants like gasoline, motor oil and fertilizers to flow into the sewers or streams, the water will be collected into a system of underground pipes, filtered and slowly released into the ground.

Three local businesses donated materials. Balcon and Oldcastle Company donated the water-permeable pavers, Mulch Solutions donated the "Stormtech" retention piping and Merrifield Gardens donated new plants.

The project is made possible by a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Scottish Games

The 32nd Annual Virginia Scottish Games and Festival is scheduled for July 23-24 at the Episcopal High School in Alexandria. According to **Sharon Coyle**, DFS, who is a member of the Virginia Scottish

Games Association, everyone is invited to see traditional Scottish athletic contests, watch bagpipe and drum competitions, cheer music and dance demonstrations and competition, and check out a variety of cultural demonstrations of Scottish life at various historical periods. Call Sharon Coyle at 703-481-4043, TTY 711, for more information.

Hot Benefit Party

The Fire & Rescue Department's combat challenge team is holding a benefit event at PJ Skidoo's Restaurant and Bar, 9908 Lee Highway, Fairfax, on Thursday, June 30, from 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Included are drink specials and the opportunity to see Team Extreme Fairfax's progress in several recent competitions. Proceeds from the event will defray the costs of travel, registration and equipment for the team to compete in the World Challenge XV. Contact **Jim Martin**, 703-591-0247, TTY 711, Fire Station 21A, if you have any questions. ■

New director of DIT's Technology Infrastructure Division named

Robert Taylor has been selected as the new division director for the Department of Information Technology's Technology Infrastructure Division (TID). He heads the division responsible for keeping the county's technology infrastructure environment current, and enabling the county's information technology operational needs and strategic initiatives.

Taylor has more than 25 years experience in the information technology industry. Before joining county government, he was vice president/CIO of corporate technology with Phillips International Inc. He also has worked for a variety of private and public sector entities, including a previous position in the U.S. Senate Computer Center. He brings a wealth of contemporary experience that matches the department's strategic initiatives and operational requirements. He also is vice chairman of the Regional Chapter of the Society for Information Management.

When asked about his management philosophy, Taylor said he "focuses on customer service, and both internal and external communication."

Taylor, his wife and daughter live in Arlington. ■



Robert Taylor (DIT photo.)

Passwords: Part II – Strong and Memorable

In Passwords Part I, the emphasis was on protecting your passwords and the characteristics of the Network/E-mail and CICS passwords. Passwords Part II will discuss techniques on creating good, strong and easy to remember passwords.

Avoid weak passwords

Weak passwords consist of any consecutive numbers or letters such as **abcdef** or **123456**. Using your userID or name of your spouse, child and/or pet names or birthdays also make weak passwords. You should never use a word that can be found in the dictionary, in any language, even if you spell it backwards!

Create strong passwords that you can remember

A strong password has at least eight characters with a combination of

upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols. It should be easy for you to remember, but difficult for others to guess. Creating a strong password is a challenge. If you come up with a completely random combination of numbers and symbols, will you remember it? Most likely you'd write it down making it a security risk. Remember, writing your password down and placing it under your keyboard, on your monitor or anywhere around your workspace is as bad as not having a strong password.

Create a strong passphrase

Coming up with a passphrase will help create a strong password that you won't have to write down. A passphrase is a sentence that you can remember, such as "My son Adam is older than my daughter." You can

Tech Tip #94

Department of Information Technology
Technical Infrastructure Division
Technical Support Center
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Tel: 703-222-3535, option 1
Fax: 703-222-3396
TTY 711

make a pretty strong password by using the first letter of each word of the sentence, **msaiotmd**. However, you can make this password even stronger by using a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and special symbols that look like the letters from your passphrase. For example, using the same passphrase and a few tricks, your password is now **M\$i0tmD**.

Get Fairfax County's information on passwords at http://infoweb/DIT/ISO/Education/PassWd_TRIFOLD.doc ■

Rebate incentives result in \$\$\$\$ for county

The Department of Finance's year-end meeting, held May 16, set the stage for receiving this year's annual rebate check from Office Depot. The \$494,562.76 check was presented to Cathy Muse, Department of Purchasing and Supply Management, and Tony Crosby, Fairfax County Public

Schools, by Bill Morris, Office Depot Mid-Atlantic regional sales director. Also participating from Office Depot were Dan Lindner and Ray Pascarella. The rebate amount was based upon total purchases of \$10.5 million for the contract year, with an extra 1 percent added because the Internet was used to make 84.4 percent of the purchases.

The Office Depot contract is one of several revenue generating contracts used by the county as part of the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance. By using the Office Depot contract, and the contracts for furniture (RQ01-411313-16A-E) and computers (RQ03-605674-16A), the county has realized rebates over \$550,000 this year.

The county's highly successful P-Card program also has provided the county with impressive rebates. In

March 2005, the county received a rebate of \$550,000 from Bank One/Chase.

In FY 2005, DPSM received over \$1 million in contractual rebates, which has been credited to the county's general fund for appropriation by the Board of Supervisors. ■



Cathy Muse (DPSM) Bill Morris, Office Depot, Tony Crosby (FCPS), Dan Lindner, Ray Pascarella (Office Depot) hold a BIG check. (Photo by Joe Benfit)



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